

**Career Development
Topic Tables Summary**

**NCI Intramural
Scientific Investigator Retreat
January 8, 2009**

- Sponsored by the NCI WSA -

Introduction

The NCI WSA sponsored a career development luncheon at the NCI Intramural Scientific Investigators Retreat on January 8, 2009. The format for the event consisted of organizing the participants into small groups of no more than 12 at round tables with senior investigators as leader each focused on a topic relevant to fostering professional development and skill building including:

- Promoting Your Career
 - Leaders: Miriam Poirier, Lynn Goldin, Terry van Dyke, Pat Steeg and Carol Prives
- Negotiating
 - Leaders: Lee Helman, Trisha Harteg and Bob Wiltrout
- Prioritizing/Time Management
 - Leaders: Terri Landi and Louise Brinton
- Managing Up
 - Leaders: Nancy Colburn and Michelle Bennett
- Networking
 - Leaders: Ann Hsing and Rashmi Sinha
- Managing Staff
 - Leaders: Elise Kohn
- Effective Mentoring and Coaching
 - Leaders: Carol Thiele and Kathy Kelly

The goals of the forums were to:

- help capture what is working for our community such that those tricks and approaches can be shared;
- learn what is not working, in order to identify any issues and gap areas as well as the change needed; and finally, and most importantly
- come up with at least one idea for a solution that the IRP could work on or implement to support the community in order to maximize the problem solving component of this forum.

The outcomes from the topic tables are summarized on the following pages and followed by recommendations for actions that the IRP can take to continue the dialogue and further support career development of its scientists.

NCI WSA

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Promoting your career

Topic Leaders: Miriam Poirier, Lynn Goldin, Terry van Dyke, Pat Steeg and Carol Prives

This topic focused on strategies and approaches to promote yourself and your science. Some of the areas of discussion included membership and leadership in organizations, journal selection, and how to get your name known in the research community.

What Works

- Decide what direction you want to take (admin, science)
- Work hard, have high quality publications, give a good talk
- Network-get involved in committees, groups, societies-organize meetings
- Let people know you're interested in giving talks, writing chapters-accept invitations
- Have a balance of safe and high-risk projects-generalize work into other areas
- Have many mentors throughout your career who can promote you
- Attend small meetings
- Investigate lateral moves-Promotion/title doesn't necessarily mean better position
- Say no
- Clearly define your scientific contributions- how it is different from others-people-show continuity, be innovative

What Does Not Work

- Think that working a lot and publishing good papers is enough
- Be shy-learn to self-promote
- Accept all requests for service work-learn to say "no"

How It Can Work Better

- Provide information on different career paths
- Offer tips on self-promotion, family/work balance, conflict resolution
- Give opportunities for oral presentations improvement/practice
- Present opportunities for Networking
- Increase the opportunities for travel and exposure
- Service at committees
- Encourage Attendance at smaller meetings
- Provide opportunities to contact leaders in the field to give seminar jointly with a major meeting
- Offer "lateral" movement to facilitate advancement

Negotiating

Topic Leaders: Lee Helman, Trisha Harteg and Bob Wiltrout

This topic focused on identifying strategies for how best to identify and ask for what you want, pitfalls of which to be aware, and the identification of some actions that could be taken by the intramural research program to help support people in building this skill area. The aim of win-win negotiation is to find a solution that is acceptable to both parties, and leaves both parties feeling that they've won, in some way, after the event.

What Works

- Figure out who you are negotiating with
- State expectations clearly- plan ahead
- Understand the interpersonal issues involved
- Recognize both sides need to benefit
- Identify your value in the organization- promote yourself, your skills-get comfortable with asking for what you want
- Practice mentally ahead of time
- Force your voice "low, slow and loud
- Use appropriate humor
- Become comfortable w/uncomfortable silences
- Determine authorship ahead of time-be careful of large studies -Ensure acknowledgement/contribution of ideas
- Understand and be comfortable with emotionally charged issues (e.g. children)
- Try giving limited choices

What Does Not Work

- Have expectations that aren't clearly defined
- Don't demand that they agree with your interpretation-get to the mutual goal
- Negotiate from a position of disadvantage or lack of understanding
- Expect that authorship can be determined later
- Don't be conflict adverse or too accommodating

How It Can Work Better

- Provide guidelines for negotiation-Study, Authorship, Salary/position, Post-docs, Projects/research, Work hours-With companies, colleagues, supervisors, post-docs, academia
- Make available the suggested reading "Institutions don't love you back"-by Joe Simone
- Supply guidelines for establishing collaborations with universities
- Offer coaching/mentoring
- Set up idea exchange-get to know then negotiate sessions
- Propose ground rules

Prioritizing/Time management

Topic Leaders: Terri Landi and Louise Brinton

This topic focused on strategies and approaches to effectively manage time and define scientific priorities to maximize individual goals and objectives. Time management simply involves considering your obligations and making choices about how to use your time. In today's world where people are juggling many roles and responsibilities it is useful to identify what works and what the intramural program can do to provide resources and support in this area.

What Works

- Prioritize
- Delegate if possible
- Learn how to say "no"
- Change your environment to get things done and avoid interruption
- Come in early
- Weekly forum to deal w/questions (avoids email nickel and diming)
- Understand Email etiquette
- Avoid idle chit-chat in your office
- Set up office hours
- Don't multitask-save emails for down time, Turn off email notification
- Take a break/walk to refresh
- Set limits on time
- Identify your own most productive time of the day-protect for most important items

What Does Not Work

- Saying "yes" to all review requests
- Responding to too many "emergencies" and "requirements"

How It Can Work Better

- Help identify priorities
- Give information to identify your productive time
- Provide the suggested reading- "getting things done" by David Allen
- Show how to delegate more-consider opportunities for junior investigators
- Suggest establishing office hours
- Provide alternative places to work

Managing up

Topic Leaders: Nancy Colburn and Michelle Bennett

What is Managing Up? We're accustomed to thinking about managing staff and employees and we don't tend to think a lot about managing across (peers) and up (bosses, other people in leadership positions). Managing situations of mutual dependence involving others requires: understanding the other person and yourself (strengths, weaknesses, work style preferences, etc...), and using this information to develop and manage healthy relationships takes in consideration individual work styles, developing shared expectations, consciously meets the needs of the other individual. Knowing how to Manage Up and Across can positively impact one's own career, the ability to mentor and guide others, as well as help staff understand how to effectively "manage you".

What Works

- Identify sources of miscommunication and avoid
- Communicate up effectively: craft argument to suit interests of audience
- Be specific, let a supervisor know exactly what you need, don't be vague
- Learn bosses preferences-communicate by email, in person?- learn how to tailor your behavior
- Tactic-assume approval(FYI) so don't have to wait on supervisors explicit okay
- Understand supervisor is busy make communication short and to point- Argument should include key points and be directed towards the interests of decision makers
- Know a good time to approach your boss
- Preparation in advance (agenda, bullets, etc), need to be succinct/direct
- Communicate (as much as in your power)

What Does Not Work

- Don't make demands (be polite and respectful)
- Don't by pass hierarchy

How It Can Work Better

- Transparency, especially in regards to how key decisions are made
- Eliminate variation across branches as to how communication occurs & decisions are made
- Follow-up to ensure proposals are not lost along the way
- Ombudsman for post-docs
- Better Communication
- Provide information on management styles so you can tailor your behavior- How to foster communication with a supervisor who is not openly communicative
- Provide other opportunities when a relationship won't work-challenge area: employees who don't have flexibility (international post-docs)
- Reduce perceived double standards between men and woman scientists

Networking

Topic Leaders: Ann Hsing and Rashmi Sinha

Surveys indicate that 50% to 75% of people found their last job through networking. You can network several ways, including networking by phone, giving a presentation, or networking face-to-face. There are many opportunities for face-to-face networking, including professional association meetings, social gatherings, and job fairs. Each individual must decide which types and places work best for their personal and professional face-to-face networking.

What Works

- Accept personal responsibility
- Google/look up person
- Change at personal level
- Try social networking online
- Make arrangements to meet
- Identify what you want, where you want to go & seek those people out
- Identify Mentors (mentors help build networks)
- Introduce yourself to a variety of people
- Maintain contacts, Reinforce bonds
- Understand cultural barriers, etiquette

What Does Not Work

- Stay in your “comfort zone”-be shy
- Email contact only w/o personal follow-up

How It Can Work Better

- Workshops to teach skills-supervisor support
- Ask/inform managers and staff about the importance of networking
- Institutional support
- Educating branch chiefs, etc about importance of promoting staff
- Encourage ice-breakers
- Set aside more \$ for meetings
- Provide networking workshops

Managing staff

Topic Leaders: Elise Kohn

The best managers reject conventional wisdom, understand each employee's individual strengths and how they contribute to the whole, focus on strengths and talent (they do not try to fix weaknesses), hire talent and not experience, and deal with conflict head-on and early. If the employee doesn't have the talent for the job, then past experience doesn't really matter.

What Works

- Utilize counselors in Frederick
- Utilize senior management for DCEG

What Does Not Work

How It Can Work Better

- Develop Management toolbox to execute responsibilities- Management Education
- Offer Communication education- 2-way, positive and negative, positive reinforcement mechanisms
- Identify assistance to recognize positives and who needs more, who succeeds and who doesn't early on- Toolbox for different positions and "attaboys"
- Develop FAQ resources to assist supervisors/staff on issues (use/abuse, communication, salary, leave, support, PMAP criteria, Guidance on under performers, etc)
- Provide an ombudsman

Effective Mentoring and Coaching

Topic Leaders: Carol Thiele and Kathy Kelly

Mentoring: *the mentor is a trusted friend, counselor or teacher, usually a more experienced person. Some professions have "mentoring programs" in which newcomers are paired with more experienced people in order to obtain good examples and advice as they advance.*

Coaching: *a coach typically works with someone who has a goal or some objectives they want to meet or a change they want to make. Through a variety of techniques such as deep questioning and reflective listening the "coach" helps the individual uncover existing strengths and abilities to develop strategies and action plans to achieve those goals. A coach helps hold "clients" accountable to themselves through continued interactions and challenging them as needed.*

Mentor/Coach: *it is entirely possible to be (or to have) a mentor/coach. This is a person who can successfully meld the two approaches and can provide one or the other depending on the needs and issues of the "mentee".*

What Works

- Setting and understanding expectations ahead of time and negotiating the relationship in the beginning makes problem solving easier e.g. how should criticism be delivered
- Set goals
- Learn how to relate (establish best form of communication) ahead of time
- Define extent of relationship (work-focus and/or life-work balance)
- Take responsibility for success if you are a trainee
- Help mentees understand their responsibilities if you are a mentor
- Have good mentoring models
- Understand too much hand-holding can rob a mentee of independence

What Does Not Work

- Assume that mixing supervisors is mentoring
- Encourage assignment of mentors-doesn't always find good matches

How It Can Be Better

- Show value of mentoring/reward
- Provide leadership from Program directors-important for showing value
- Strong leadership from Division Director to promote strong mentoring
- Provide fellows with concrete expectations for their progress (pull downs or templates may be helpful)
- Provide opportunities of discussions on the differences between early vs late mentoring of fellows (that is during the 1st few years vs later years as they are job seeking)
- Raise consciousness regarding the importance of mentoring/provide concrete guidelines.